

Volunteer Immigration Program: Hope and Relief in a New Year

By Antonio Hernandez
LRIS Supervisor

Ilyce Shugall's decision to become a lawyer was fueled by a desire to help people and make a difference in the world. She got her start as a National Association of Public Interest Law Equal Justice Fellow working for two years at the South Texas Pro Bono Asylum Representation Project (ProBAR). With ProBAR, Shugall conducted live group rights presentations to detained individuals and provided direct representation to indigent respondents before the Immigration Court.



Ilyce Shugall

After moving to San Francisco in 2001, Ilyce joined Van Der Hout, Brigagliano, & Nightingale. The firm is known for taking on impact litigation cases, including the extremely difficult and controversial cases that many other attorneys do not have the resources to fight. As an extension of her firm's philosophy, Shugall is making an impact for her clients, and in the immigrant and legal community as well. As an active member of the Northern California Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA

NORCAL), Shugall currently serves as the Executive Office for Immigration Review Pro Bono Coordinator.

In this role, she had a hand in the creation and development of the Lawyer Referral and Information Service's Volunteer Immigration Program (VIP).

In May of 2007, VIP was launched to provide full scope pro bono services to unrepresented indigent respondents in non-custody removal proceedings. After a year, it seemed the intended clients were failing to connect with VIP, so this summer Shugall helped craft and implement a bold change: the clinics were removed from the screening process and she volunteered to screen all clients referred to the program.

In four months time, the number of clients placed with pro bono representation tripled compared to the first seven months of 2008. As of November 2008, the program was on pace to double 2007's total.

Shugall continues to labor at ideas to ensure that the program works more efficiently, recruits more attorneys, and helps more people.

When asked what is most rewarding about her career, Shugall explained that

it was successfully helping her clients, many of whom find themselves in, "really scary, distressing, and sad situations," and sharing, "her knowledge and expertise to help other attorneys help people."

In 2009 many people will be inspired to hope by different things. Here in San Francisco, there is hope for immigrants

and their families because people, like Ilyce Shugall, find reward in bringing relief to their worries and legal problems, free of charge.

If you are interested in learning more about, or participating in the Volunteer Immigration Program, please contact Antonio Hernandez at ahernandez@sfbar.org or 415-782-9000 x8113.

Did you know....

Each year, more than 50,000 individuals and businesses worldwide call LRIS seeking qualified, experienced legal representation from San Francisco attorneys like you.

Here are just a few of the benefits of joining an LRIS panel:

Attorney-to-Attorney: Consult with an experienced attorney, FREE!

Apprenticeship Program: Apprentice attorneys gain experience with expert panel members to ensure qualified representation of indigent defendants.

Indigent Defense Administration (IDA): If you perform services for the court, visit our online library to download payment forms and get current information on policies and procedures.

Dependency Representation Program (DRP): If you are an attorney performing services for the courts, visit our online library to download payment forms you must use to get current information on policies and procedures.

Visit www.sfbar.org/lris